Love's Pedigree.

OR

A Diſcourſe ſhewing the Grace of LOVE in a Believer to be of

A Divine Original

Delivered in a

SERMON

Preached at the Lecture in *Boſton*, *Febr.* 29. 1699. 1700

By S. Willard, *Teacher of a Church there.*

Jam. 1. 17.

Every good gift, & every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.

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Love's Pedigree

1 John IV. 19.

We Love him; becauſe he firſt Loved us.

THE knowledge of our good and ſafe Eſtate, deriving from an intereſt in the Everlaſting Love of God, is a thing which every one who hath right thoughts of the Eternity he is going to, will be very ſollicitous about. There is, beſides the *Teſtimony* of the Spirit of God to this in us, which is neceſſary for our confirmation in the belief of it, the *witneſs* of our own ſpirit requiſite, for our ordinary *Aſſurance* about it, which muſt be given to thoſe things in us which are evidential of it. Theſe *Evidences* are built upon the diſcovery of ſuch fruits or effects of the love of God wrought in us, as are proper and diſtinguiſhing, and theſe are mainly the Graces of *Faith* and *Repentance*; and theſe are

put into us by the operation of the Spirit of God, in our *Effectual Vocation*; and becauſe there may be ſomething like unto theſe found in Hypocrites, which may cheat them into falſe and preſumptuous hopes of their good eſtate; there is a yet farther trial to be made of them, to prove that this *Faith* is *unfeigned*, and that this *Repentance* is *unto life*, which muſt be gathered from thoſe diſtinguiſhing fruits of them, which are not to be found in the other. Theſe *fruits* are all of them in the Word of God, reduced to that common head of *love*, by which *Faith* is ſaid to *Operate*, *Gal.* 5. 6. Which *Love* is diſtributed according to the next or immediate objects of it, into the *loving of God*, and of our *brother*; and becauſe theſe two are inſeparable, they are therefore made uſe of mutually to evidence each the other; inaſmuch as, if we truly love our brother, it derives from our love to God as the principle, in which it is rooted; and if we love God indeed, it will unfailingly produce the other love in us. So that the grand Caſe into which our *Self-Examination* muſt ultimately reſolve it ſelf, is, *Whether God loveth us with that love which he bears to his Choſen*; becauſe if we are but ſure of this, the inference is infallible, *viz.* that we ſhall certainly at laſt arrive at Eternal Life; how happy then muſt we needs be? and the enquiry on which this concluſion muſt determine, is, *Whether we do cordially and*

and ſincerely love God? for though our happy ſtate was ſecured for us in the former, it being appointed and ſettled in that love of his, yet we cannot come at the knowledge of it but by the latter.

The words of our *Text* give us a reaſon of the ſafety of this way of concluding, and ſhew us why and wherein it amounts to a *Demonſtration*, in as much as it leads us from the *Effect* to the *ſupream cauſe* from whence it muſt derive. It is needleſs to enquire after the coherence of our *Text* with the *Context*, the words themſelves being an entire propoſition, and having abundant matter of profitable inſtruction in them: and the deſign of them is, not only to aſſert the cloſe connexion that there is between our loving of God, and his loving us; but alſo to point us to the reaſon of this Connexion, and ſhew us the cloſeneſs of it, and the ſafety of our inferring his love to us from ours to him; and if it be enquired to what kind of reaſoning it is to be referred? I anſwer, it muſt needs be to the *Efficient Cauſe*. It doth not only intimate that there is a *Concomitancy*, but alſo a *Cauſality*: for, though the word [*becauſe*] doth not always refer us to the cauſe of the thing but may refer to any other head of arguments, and is accordingly to be judged of by the nature of that which it refers to; yet it muſt do ſo in this place, inaſmuch as we are here given to underſtand the

priority of Gods love to us, as that from which we come to love him, which can be inferred from no other but the *Efficient*. The word is an *Adjective*, and not an *Adverb*; and that alſo puts force into the argument; he was the *firſt* in this love, and thence it was that our love followed after. Hence,

DOCTRINE.

Our Loving of God is the genuine effect of his firſt Loving of us. If we love him in time, it is becauſe he firſt loved us from Eternity.

I ſhall not inſiſt on this *Doctrine* at large, but reſtrain the following Diſcourſe to the reſolution of the following *Caſe, viz.*

Queſt. *In what reſpect Gods love to us is leading to, and influential of our loving of him?*

A. That we may take up the right meaning of the Caſe, in order to the better reſolution of it: There are theſe two remarks to be made.

1. *That by Gods love to us, we are to underſtand his Eternal purpoſe of good will, by which he appointed us to Salvation by Chriſt.* *Love* is improperly attributed to God, in whom there are no *Paſſions* or *Affections*, properly ſo called, inaſmuch as they

they argue imperfection, and compoſition in the ſubject of them, which is incompatible with the moſt abſolute firſt Being. But becauſe theſe are in men the Inſtruments of the *Will*, by the Miniſtry whereof it performs its *Imperate Actions*, or they are the various poſtures of it with reſpect to its *Object*, according to the reſentment that it hath of it; hereupon when we ſee ſuch things done in Gods Works of Efficiency, as are wont to be managed by ſuch an *Affection*; we, after our manner of conception, aſcribe it to that *Affection*; becauſe we cannot otherwiſe expreſs it. Now *love is an Affection in us, which beareth good will to the Object of it and expreſſeth it ſelf in acts of kindneſs to it.* As therefore it is an Humane Affection, it is rooted in the heart or will, and is on all opportunities diſcovering it ſelf in the carriage; and from this conception of it, when God manifeſteth his benignity to the Creature, we conceive him, in his ſo doing, to act as a cauſe by Counſel, and ſo aſcribe it to his *Benevolence*, and call it his *love*. And from this conſideration, there is a divers love that is aſſigned to him, according to the different effects of his good will, diſcerned in the fruits of his *Beneficence* to the Subject of it. There is a *common love* attributed to him, wherein the good and the bad do promiſcuouſly partake; and it appears in that *Goodneſs* of his which he confers upon them, wherein he gives them large taſts of his

his bounty; and to this love we are pointed in, Psal. 145. 9. *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* And *Acts* 14. 17. *He left not himself without witness in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* And there is an *Especial* love of his that we are told of, which he bears only to some, and in comparison with which others are said to be hated, according to Rom. 9. 13. *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*; and it appears in those peculiar favours which he hath laid in for, and bestows upon them; of which we have such observations, *Joh.* 3. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,* &c. 1 *Joh.* 4 9. *In this was the love of God manifested towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*; and this is the love that we are now considering of, and is intended in our *Text*: which, if we run up to the top of it, is nothing else but *that good will of his, by which he purposed to bestow all saving good upon us.* There is a *natural* love which we ascribe to God, by which he loveth himself eternally, being his own last end: and with this love every Sacred *Person* in the undivided *Trinity* love each other; and there is a *voluntary* love which we conceive in him, which must needs flow from his good pleasure; for we are told, Rom. 9. 18. *He hath mercy on whom*

om he will have mercy. And ſuch muſt be all
e love which he bears to the Creature, ſince
being, and all that he doth to it or for it
rive from his holy pleaſure, *Who doth all things*
ording to the Counſel of his will, Eph. 1. 11. And
was this love that procured our Salvation, *Gal.*
20. *Who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.*

2. *That by our loving of God we muſt underſtand,*
at Cordial reſpect which we have for him, where-
we have choſen him for our portion, and are en-
rely devoted to his fear. Love in us, is an Af-
ction leading us in purſuit after Union to the object
it, in order to our having intimate Communion
ith it: for love is a *Cloſing* Affection, and
rrieth us forth after that which we love. That
hich attracts our love to it, is the *Goodneſs*
hich we apprehend to be in the object of it,
hich renders it a thing lovely; the diſcovery
f which goodneſs made to the *Underſtanding*,
oves on the *Judgment*, and by that on the
eart, and draws it out after it. Now the ex-
reſſion of this love is in *a ſuitable reſpect* that
e ſhew to the object of it, and is accordingly
iverſifyed, as there is a different reference or re-
tion that we bear to it: the love therefore
f Parents to their Children, and of Children
o their Parents doth not ſhew it ſelf after the
me manner. There are therefore theſe two
ings wherein our real love to God appears,
Viz.

Viz. In our renouncing of all other things him, chusing him alone for our portion, accordingly depending upon him for all; we can say as the Church, Lam. 3. 24. *The is my portion saith my Soul, therefore I will him*: And as the Psalmist, *Psal.* 62. 5. *My wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is him* And in our submitting our selves greatest willingness and delight to his Servi Christ therefore directs to this as the Evide of our love. *Joh* 14 15. *If ye love me keep Commandments.* Love is therefore used in Scriptures to express all that *Obedience* we pay to God, in studying and practising versal conformity to his revealed will. Thi rooted in our hearts by the delight we have his precepts; when we can say with him, *R* 7. 22 *I delight in the Law of God after the inw man.* And it is exerted in our life, when devote our whole man to New Obedien *When we love the Lord our God with all our he and all our soul, and all our mind, Matth.* 22.

It now follows that we proceed to the re lution of the Case; and we may take it up the following Propositions.

1. *This love of ours with which we love God, not barely a* Natural Affection, *or a* Moral Pr ciple *in it, but a* Grace of the Spirit. The

ings ral affection indeed is the Subject of it, in
n, a hich it is rooted, but we muſt diſtinguiſh be-
; wh ween the affection it ſelf, and the love which
be L rooted in it. *Love hath Good for its Object*;
hop nd ſuch as the good is, ſo is the love denomi-
My S ated. We love the things that are ſuited to
is fr ur inclinations: and hence there is in Unre-
s w enerate men, a *Carnal Love* which inclines them
ervic the gratification of their carnal Luſts, and ſo
ideme objects which are ſuited thereto attract
eep eir love. There is a *Natural Love* in men to
in ch perſons or things as are agreeable to their
whi atures: and there is a love to the things that
g ure *Morally Good and Honeſt*, which ſome Un-
Thi onverted men have in them, and it proceeds
ave rom a principle of Morality, which either re-
R ains in them notwithſtanding the fall, or hath
inw een acquired by them: but none of theſe a-
n mounts to the love which we are now in the
len Conſideration of: There is then a *Divine*
he Love, which carries men out to God, and to
2. Heavenly things, and fixeth them there: and
his flows from a ſpecial gracious principle in-
re ſed into the man by the Spirit of God, and can
up laim its Original from no other; it is there-
ore called one of the fruits of the Spirit, and
s the firſt named, *Gal.* 5 22. *The fruit of the*
od, Spirit is love, &c. This love of God indeed was
Pr *Connatural* to man in his ſtate of integrity, being
e one of thoſe Graces of Sanctification which
tu were

were concreated in him, and belonged to th
Image of God which was at first put upon hi
and adorned him. This love was active a
vigorous in man before such time as he had
praved himself by Sin; and *none of the Comma*
were grievous to him.

2. *The Apostasy robbed man of that holy love*
God which was at first planted in him. This it
when it stript him of the *Image of God*, in wh
this and all the other Graces of Sanctificati
were contained. When man put off the Ima
from him, all that was Spiritual, or *Theologic*
good in him went with it: So that every U
regenerate man, if he will say the Truth, m
confesses of himself entirely, as *Paul* doth of hi
self in respect to his worser part, *Rom.* 7.
In me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thi
Man, who at first loved God as his last end a
chief good, now ceaseth to do so, and there is
one spark of that primitive love left in him.
is said of every natural man, *that the love of*
Father is not in him, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15. The Affecti
of love abides in the man, it being essential
his Humanity, and inseparable from it; but
hath shifted objects, and exchanged God for
Creature; Unconverted men are said to
Lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God, 2 *T*
3. 4. And hereupon that is one title put up
ungodly men, *Rom.* 1. 30. *Haters of God.*

that their firſt love, in reſpect of the object on which it was placed, is turned into hatred.

3. *This love muſt be again recovered by the man, in order to his being made to enjoy God, and to be happy in him.* It is certain that mans true happineſs conſiſts in his enjoying of God, who is the only adequate object of felicity; no other can make a ſuitable and ſufficient portion for the reaſonable Creature: to be far from God, is to be miſerable indeed, *Pſal.* 73. 27. *For lo, all that are far from thee, ſhall periſh: In his favour there is life; his loving kindneſs is better than life it ſelf.* Now God is a portion for none but thoſe that love him: it is by love that we come to have Communion with him, which is our bleſſedneſs, *Prov.* 8. 17. *I love them that love me.* Hatred keeps the Sinner at a diſtance from God, and there is a fearful Curſe out againſt all ſuch, *Pſal.* 21. 8. *&c. Thine hand ſhall find out all thine Enemies, thy right hand ſhall find out thoſe that hate thee; thou ſhalt make them as a fiery Oven, &c.* Whereas there is a great Bleſſing in ſtore for ſuch as love him, *Pſal.* 5. 11, 12. *Let them that love thy name, be joyful in thee; for thou Lord, wilt bleſs the righteous, with favour wilt thou compaſs him as a ſhield.* It therefore infinitely concerns us all to ſee that the love of God dwells in us; and this is it which the Apoſtle prays for in

their

their behalf, 2 Thes. 3. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the Love of God.*

4. *It utterly exceeds the power of man to recover this Principle, and the activity of it.* Of the Natural mans inability to exert any truly Gracious action, the Scripture abundantly informs us, Josh. 24 19. *Ye cannot serve God.* Rom. 8. 7, 8. *The Carnal mind is Enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the Flesh, cannot please God.* 2 Cor. 3. 5. *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing, as of our selves.* Now this defect ariseth from the loss of the Image of God on his Heart, and his incapacity of getting it again by any Endeavour of his own. Because he hath not a root of Grace in him, therefore he cannot act Graciously; for *no Effect can exceed the Vertue of its Cause*: And because there is a contrary Principle in him, which reigns over every Faculty and Power within him, he therefore is not able to withstand it. Indeed he cannot so much as desire to Love God, much less is he able to restore this Grace to his heart again. The Will therefore as well as the Deed, must be of his operation in us, Phil. 2. 13. *It is God who worketh in you to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.* The restoring of lost Grace to fallen man, is a work of Omnipotency, and therefore none but

but he who is Almighty is able to do it in us: it is therefore compared to a Creation, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. *God who commanded the light to ſhine out of the darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, &c.* And to a Reſurrection, *Eph.* 2. 1. *You hath he quickned, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* Love is a thing that is not to be purchaſed; *all that a man would offer for it will be deſpiſed, Cant.* 8 7. Which may be interpreted as well of our loving God, as of his loving us.

5. *This love is a ſaving gift, and therefore muſt have God for its Author.* It is one of thoſe things which we are told *do accompany Salvation, Heb.* 6 9. and is therefore called *a fruit of the Spirit,* in the fore cited, Gal. 5. 22. This love is an effect of the New-birth, whereof God is the Author, 1 *John* 4. 7. *Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God.* And indeed, it being one of the Graces of Sanctification, it muſt needs proceed from Gods Efficiency, for it is he that *Sanctifieth us,* 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. And the wonderful change that is made in the man by it, muſt force us to ſay of it, *behold the finger of God.* To ſee one who the other day deſpiſed God, had no deſire after him, bad him to depart from him, choſe carnal objects, lying vanities rather than him; nay, hated his counſels, and was full of all prejudices againſt him; now to love him, to chuſe him, to embrace him, to forſake all for him,

to ſubmit to him, and delight in his Service is a thing of which no other account can be given but *that God hath created him a new in Chriſt Jeſus*, that he hath given him another and a *New heart*, or otherwiſe it could never have been.

6. *There was nothing in us that could move God to produce this ſaving quality in us.* In all voluntary actions, which are done by a Rational Agent, we are wont to enquire after the *Impulſive cauſe* of them, or what it was that moved and engaged him ſo to do: and by ſuch meaſures as theſe are we neceſſitated to conceive of God's Works of Efficiency: It is a demonſtration of Gods wonderful love to us, that he will put a principle of Sanctification into us, and thereby *reſtores us from death to life*, and whence was it that he ſo did; or what was it that induced him hereunto? Certainly it could not be from any lovelineſs that he ſaw in us, for there was none; we had nothing in us that was deſirable, but every thing was hateful: the *Image of God*, which once was our beauty and ornament was gone; and the *Image of Sin*, which is our ſhame and vileneſs was contracted, and by virtue of it we were every way abominable: when therefore God ſpeaks of doing ſuch things for backſlidden *Iſrael*, he would have them to take that humbling remark upon it. *Ezek.* 36. 22. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I do not this*

for your ſakes, Oh houſe of Iſrael but for mine holy names ſake, &c. Nor was he moved hereto by our requeſts and prayers; it was not becauſe we, in ſenſe of our folly and miſery, ſought relief of him, that his bowels earned towards us, for he himſelf ſaith, *Iſa.* 65. 1. *I am ſought of them that asked not for me, I am found of them that ſought me not*; and though he hath declared, in *Ezek.* 36. 37. *I will yet for this be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do it for them.* Yet his *preventing grace* produceth this in us, otherwiſe we ſhould never have thus enquired after him, but abode in our diſtance from him.

7. *Hence the ſpring or riſe of all this muſt be from his love or good will to us.* When we have ſearched into all the cauſes of Regeneration, in which this gracious principle is wrought in us, we muſt ultimately determine it hither: we are made to partake in this Grace, becauſe God hath appointed us to it; and the reaſon why we were ſo appointed, was becauſe it ſo pleaſed God; *Mat.* 11. 25, 26. *Thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them to babes; even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* God therefore tells *Iſrael*, that he loved them becauſe he loved them; *Deut.* 7. 7, 8. *The Lord did not ſet his love upon you, becauſe ye were more*

in number, &c. but becauſe the Lord loved you. Intimating that the motive of this love was no where to be ſought out of himſelf; and on this account God aſſigns our effectual calling to a love of his own that never had any beginning, *Jer.* 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love, therefore with loving kindneſs have I drawn thee*; and needs muſt it be ſo, for he is the firſt cauſe and laſt end of all things, *Rom.* 11. *ult. Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* Nor could his Grace be otherwiſe abſolutely free, and ſoveraign, as the Goſpel every where aſſures us that it is.

8. *All the engagements by which our love is excited to act upon him, are from his firſt loving of us.* As there is the planting of ſaving grace in us, in our Renovation, by which a principle is infuſed into us, enabling and diſpoſing of us to love him, ſo there are the *attractives* by which this principle is drawn forth into act, which are ſo many motives to ſtir up this love in us; for our love of God is not a bruiſh paſſion, but it is acted with the higheſt reaſon; and all the reaſons of it are found in his love to us: he therefore thus draws us in order to our following of him; *Cant.* 1. 14. *Draw me, we will run after thee*, and the way in which he allures us, is by his love, *Hoſ.* 11. 4. *I drew thee with the cords of a man, with the*

the bands of love. Now there are principally such things as these, the consideration and belief whereof attract the love of our Souls to God.

1. *It was this love that appointed us to be the heirs of Salvation.* The Word of God doth frequently expres our Salvation under the consideration of an *Inheritance*; and so all the claims that we can make to it, must be in way of *Heirship*: and we are not born heirs to it by a natural birth, but are introduced into it by a voluntary *Adoption*: we had in our selves no more of right to it than the Devils, nor could we make out a better claim to it than the rest of Apostate mankind: we were common heirs with them of the same destruction, *Eph.* 2 3. *Being children of wrath by nature even as others.* We therefore come to have a right thereto according to appointment, 1 *Thes.* 5. 9. *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ.* Nor can there be a greater obligation upon us to love God, than the consideration of this eternal design: to think that God had such a thought of good will for us, when he proposed no such favour for millions as good, and as well deserving as we; and this is owing to his love, 1 *Joh.* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God?* And sure this love must be more ancient than ours to him, who but the

other day hated him, and were his Enemies.

2. *This love provided Christ to purchase Salvation for us.* Such was our unhappy condition by the Fall, that there could be no salvation for us, but by a satisfaction made to offended Justice, which Attribute must not in the least vail its glory in this affair, or so much as stoop to mercy in it. If God will save us, he must provide a *Jesus* for us, one that can *save us from our sins.* The Law must have a reparation made for the violation of it; our contracted Guilt must be expiated; we cannot do this for our selves, *thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oyl* will not do it; there must a *Surety* interpose to undertake this, none could do it but the Son of God, he must be made *Sin* and a *Curse* for us, he must have *all our Iniquities laid upon him, and by his stripes we must be healed*: the case was reduced to this exigence, either God must destroy us everlastingly for our sins, or do the execution upon his own Son in our stead; nothing else would have done: Certainly then here was love unparallel'd: Christ himself expresseth it as that which exceeds all comparison, *Joh.* 3. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*: And the Apostle thought it to be an argument which could not be over strained, in the exercise of our faith for the obtaining of all the good that is laid up in the promise, *Rom.* 8.

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32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* and the conſideration of it will be further amplified, by obſerving that this was done for us before we had any love for him: not only was it agreed upon in the eternal compact, that Chriſt ſhould in fulneſs of time come, and work out ſalvation for us, but the thing it ſelf was accompliſhed on our account during our being his enemies, *Rom.* 5. 8, 10. *God commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us. When we were enemies we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son.*

3. *This love hath revealed Chriſt to us as an Object ſuitable for us to truſt in for ſalvation.* As it exceeded the reach of any created underſtanding to find out the way of ſalvation by Chriſt: the thing it ſelf being a myſtery of Infinite wiſdom; ſo the *Revelation* or declaration of him to ſinful men is of God alone. It is his *Goſpel* in which Chriſt is publiſhed; there it is that we are acquainted with his Perſon and Offices, his undertaking and accompliſhment, his Incarnation, ſubjection to the Law, and making ſatisfaction to it for us; how acceptable his Redemption was to his father, how ſufficient it was for us, to procure peace and life for us; there it is that we are acquainted how, and aſſured that *he*

is able to ſave all thoſe to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, Heb. 7. 25. How many nations are there in the world that hear nothing of him, and thereupon they *periſh* unavoidably for *lack of viſion*? Certainly this good news, is a token of Gods good will, it is he who ſends it unto us, and treats with us in it; They that bring theſe glad tidings are his *Ambaſſadors*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *We are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as if God did beſeech you by us.* It is a treaty of peace and reconciliation which is opened hereby to us, but for which we muſt have remained utter ſtrangers unto peace for ever.

4. *This love hath pointed out to us the way of Salvation by Chriſt.* As God hath laid it in Chriſt for us, ſo he hath in the Goſpel diſcovered the way of it to us. There is a *way* in which Sinful men muſt come to partake in the precious fruits of Chriſt Redemption, and there are *terms* on which theſe are conveyed to us; now God hath opened theſe terms, and laid out all the Articles of the New Covenant in his Goſpel. This is not a favour which all partake in: it is ſaid of the Gentiles, who are without the Goſpel, in *Rom.* 3. 17. *The way of peace have they not known.* And we are told in, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. *That God hath brought life and immortality to light through the Goſpel.* There are the propoſals in the New-Covenant which

which muſt be complied withal, by thoſe that hope to be Saved by Chriſt; they that never hear of them, can never comply with them, *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard.* And it is Gods love to his choſen that moved him to open this Covenant and propoſe the terms of it to them, in order to their being brought into it.

5. *This love hath not only provided the means, but alſo renders them effectual to our Salvation.* God brings about the Salvation of his Elect in the way of means, as beſt accommodated to his treating of them as reaſonable Creatures; he hath therefore appointed them in the Goſpel; and they are the *gifts* of our glorified Saviour, *Eph* 4. 10. *&c.* It is therefore a ſingular favour for men to enjoy them; there is that remark, *Pſal.* 147. 19, 20. *He ſhewed his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes and his judgments unto Iſrael; he hath not dealt ſo with any nation, &c.* And it muſt be ſo, for the want of them is a note of perdition, 2 *Cor* 4. 3. *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt.* But yet many have them, and they prove occaſions of their greater ruine, becauſe they abuſe them: Herein therefore is Gods love, antecedently to ours eminently celebrated, in that he gives a bleſſing to the means, and ſo making them powerful to advance the end of them, *Rom.* 1. 16.

1. 16. *The Gospel is the power of God to Salvation, in them that believe*; and why only in such as do believe? why because the Spirit of God comes in with them to such, and leaves saving impressions by them. Now all these are the incentives of our love, and do certainly proceed from his loving us first.

USE. I.

We may hence infer the Doctrine of personal Election. Great attempts have been and are used in the Christian world to undermine this truth, but all are in vain: If there were no more Scripture evidence for the confirmation and establishment of this *Article* of our faith, but only the words of our *Text*, it is sufficient to enervate all the cavils and objections that are brought against it. If Gods first loving us be not only a *Reason*, but a *Cause* too of our loving him; and consequently if any of us have the love of God produced in him, it is an evidence of that antecedent love which he bare to us; it so becomes a distinguishing note between them whom he loved and others; and for that reason it must needs be an infallible evidence of Gods having such a love for us before, which must needs be from Eternity, because his will and purpose is like himself *Immutable*. And this can amount to nothing less than a *Personal Election*;

Election: for, if God be the author of this Grace in us, and he produceth it by his Spirit becauſe he loved us, than we were perſonally appointed thereto from Eternity. So the Apoſtle layes it down, *Eph.* 1. 3, 4. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all Spiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt: according as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy.*

USE. II.

This tells us that Gods Electing love could not be founded on the previſion of any thing in the Creature. We are here acquainted with the *Abſolute Sovereignty* of God in this affair. If Gods love be the firſt cauſe of all Grace and Good to us, it muſt needs then be it ſelf *Independent*, for that is an inſeparable property of a Supream Cauſe. If Gods love produceth all that is good in the Creature, it is then impoſſible that the goodneſs of the Creature ſhould produce that love to it. To limit Gods ſpecial love which he bears unto any, unto ſomething foreſeen in the Subject, is to make ſomething in us that did precede that, and that did not derive from it as the Efficient of it; which is to invert the order of Cauſes, and put the ſecond being in the place of the firſt. God could not foreſee any thing lovely in us, but upon his own purpoſe to confer it upon us,

on

on which the futurity of it depended; an
therefore this foresight could not cause his lov
but must needs flow from it. He bestowed th
gift on us because he loved us, *Rev.* 1. 5. *Un*
him that loved us, and washed us from our sins,
his blood.

USE. III.

Hence we learn what little reason they have t
think that God loved them, who are void of th
love of God. It is true, Gods love to those whom
he hath Chosen in Christ, runs under ground
for a great while; and there are those whom h
hath an endeared respect for, who are at presen
in arms of rebellion against him, who have n
regard for him, who *say unto him, depart from us*
such indeed are all Gods Elect before Conversi
on, *Eph.* 2. 2, 3. *Wherein in times past ye walke*
according to the course of this world, &c and wer
Children of wrath, even as others, Tit. 3. 3. *We ou*
selves also were sometimes foolish, and disobedient
&c. And though there are unseen ways in which
this love of his is before hand working towar
them, yet all this while they have no groun
of evidence to prove their interest in his spe
cial favour. It is certain, if any are the Sub
jects of this love it will sooner or later brea
forth in their *Calling*, and will kindle in the
a sincere love to him; *Jer.* 31 3. *I have loved th*
wit

with an everlasting love, therefore in loving kindness have I drawn thee. And this is the first discovery by which they know that he loved them, 2 Thes. 2. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to Salvation, through the Sanctification of the Spirit.* And therefore the order of *Assurance* is to come at the knowledge of our *Election* by our *Vocation*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. In vain then do they pretend to be the beloved of God, who do not love and serve him cordially.

USE. IV.

Hence it follows, that they who truely love God, cannot but acknowledge and adore his Electing love to them. What is the reason why the Professing World, is so full of prejudices against the Doctrine of *Gods free Sovereign Election*, and that there are so few that can relish, or patiently endure the Preaching of it? Doubtless it must be because they were never experimentally acquainted with it. That man who hath had *the love of God shed abroad in his heart*, and hath known what it is to be *Saved by Grace*, will put the greatest Emphasis upon this Article of it; and his love will be the more ardently enflamed by it, to think that herein God hath manifested what precious and endearing

endearing thoughts he had for him in the da
of Eternity; how diſtinguiſhing that love w
when he had neither being nor deſervin

My Prayer then for all ſuch prejudiced perſons ſhall be, that God will give unto them the experience of this love in themſelves, and that will ſilence all their uprisings of heart, and fill them with adoration.

FINIS.